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(1875)

II. Part of a Letter from Mr Ralph Thoresby,
F. R. S. concerning Pewter Money, Coynd in Ire-
land, by the late King James.

Leeds, June 7. 1704.

Honoured Sir,

THIS brings you an account of a Curiosity that re-
lates to the late King James's Irish Money, which
I am apt to think you never heard of, viz. a Crown
piece of Pewter, inscribed *Melioris tessera fuit*. 'Twas sent
me by the Gentleman who found them in the Treasury
at Dublin; whose account is so particular and curious,
that I will choose to give it you in his own words.
" That King James, having turned all the Brass Guns of
" Ireland, and all the Brass and Copper Vessels of Pro-
" testants that he could seize, into Coyn, viz. Half-
" Crowns somewhat bigger than an English Half-penny,
" Shillings broader, but not so thick as a Farthing, and
" Six pences in proportion; it was order'd to pass cur-
" rent in all Payments, even in Bonds, and discharge of
" Judgments and Statutes; (insomuch that if Ages to
" come knew not the reason, they would admire to be
" told, that there was a time when men absconded, to
" avoid receiving their Debts, as many here did :) But
" these stocks of Metal being all spent (which he began
" to Coyn in June 1689. and no Circulation to bring
" them back into his Treasury, he call'd in all that he
" had Coynd, and the Half-Crowns, which before
" were

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“ were stamped with a Face, were re-stamped with his
“ *Effigies* on Horseback, and then paid out to those who
“ brought them in, as Crowns; and the smaller, Coyns
“ were melted down, and re-coyned again under the
“ same Denominations, but with less Metal. After the
“ turn was served by this Stratagem, he had not where-
“ withal to import Copper and Brass; but, for want of
“ it, fell foul on the Pewter Dishes, &c. — And the
“ piece I sent you of that Metal was Coyned for five
“ Shillings; and the Proclamation to make it passable
“ was as ready as the Stamps, for it was prepared: But
“ King *William* passing the *Boyne*, prevented their Pro-
“ claiming it. There was very little of it Coyned, for
“ our Government could meet with none of it; until
“ one day, rummaging all their Tinkerly Treasure, that
“ they had left behind them in *Dublin* when they were
“ routed, by accident I met with one Bag of 150 of those
“ Pieces. So that the Piece I sent you, altho it's of no Intrin-
“ sick Value, it's a Rarity; and had I thought it would
“ have been acceptable, I would have sent you a Specimen
“ of every sort that he had Coyned and Re-coyned
“ here. I am,

Sir, *Your very Humble Servant,*

Dublin, *Novemb.*
the 27th, 1696.

Tho. Putland.

This Valuable Curiosity has the same Inscription on both sides, as the common Brass Crowns; but there is this Legend added upon the Rim of it, *MELIORIS TESSERA FATI ANNO REGNI SEXTO,*